



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# MUSIC IN CHINESE FAIRYTALE AND LEGEND

By FREDERICK H. MARTENS

## INTRODUCTION

THE fairytale of every land and race is a protest against the material, a denial of the commonplaces of existence. It expresses that yearning on the part of the human soul—whether imprisoned in a white, red, yellow or black bodily envelope—for the vistas of the fantastic and supernatural opening out from Keats' "magic casements." And musical allusions are of frequent occurrence in the fairytale, for music is the most imaginative, volatile and immaterial of the arts. The halls of the trolls, whose golden splendors are hidden within Norse mountains; the crystal-walled dragon-palaces beneath the China seas, all those spreading kingdoms of fairytale which escape the limitations of finite geography, have their music, a superlative of that of ordinary life. And, since all fairytales hark back to the primitive in mankind, as the phenomena of necromancy is their diurnal incident, incantation one of their most accepted forms of action, the unreal and the magical their familiar ambient, it would be strange were music—which is of magic origin—not often instanced in various connections in these stories man's imagination has devised to voice dreams and aspirations discounted by materialism.

In their love for music as well as in the richness of their literature of fairytale, myth and legend, the Chinese are surpassed by no other race. The magic fiddle of German and Scandinavian fairytale, is paralleled by the green jade flute which the Princess Toys-with-Jewels (in the Chinese story of "The Fluteplayer") plays in her lofty Phoenix tower. And the heroines who sing in the fairytales of China, have voices every whit as well trained—according to the traditions of Middle Kingdom *bel canto*—as any we may encounter in the fairytales of Ireland, Hungary, Italy or Spain.

The Jesuit missionary Père Amiot, who was a capable performer on the clavecin and the transverse flute, who studied Chinese music and talked with Chinese musicians during his long stay in the country, toward the second half of the eighteenth

century, tried to charm them by his performances of Rameau's *les Sauvages* and *les Cyclopes*, and the most melodious flute compositions from Blavet's collection, but all in vain. He was told that

The airs of our music pass from the ear to the heart, and from the heart to the soul. We feel and understand them: those which you have played for us do not produce this effect upon us. The airs of our ancient music were quite another matter; it was enough to hear them in order to be enraptured.

The degeneracy from ancient musical tradition to which allusion is made in this remark of an eighteenth-century Mongolian music-lover is not, perhaps, to be taken too seriously. We may consider it one of those truisms of all contemporaneous criticism, which regrets the glories of a distant golden age whose perfection seems the more perfect the farther it recedes into the mists of legend and myth. No doubt but what, even at the period of the great Hoang-ti, who is supposed to have reigned 2700 years B. C., learned musicologists of his time shook their heads over the decay of their art, and sighed for good old times even more ancient, before the modernisms of their own day had tampered with the heritage of their ancestors.

The standard of present-day Chinese popular music, the music of the streets, is musically as low as our own, and textually probably more objectionable in some respects, though it could not possibly be so in others. But there is temple music, there are occupational songs, and folk-songs in the truest sense, which—especially in such Indo-Chinese lands as Annam and Java—are melodically quite lovely, even to our ears, though a rhythmic rather than a tonal harmony, the peculiarities of oriental vocal tone-production, and the exotic character lent by the use of the five-tone scale and bizarre instrumental *timbres* foreign to our ears, may obscure their charm. Then, too, with regard to Chinese music as alluded to in the fairytale, we must remember that all fairytale employs the superlative degree. Its jewels are larger, more radiant, than those of actuality, they are endowed with mystic properties and magic powers; its gold is the gold of enchantment, its springs are the fountains of youth, its medicines are productive of miraculous cures, its birds are rocs, its fishes human beings who languish beneath a spell, its beasts are werewolves and dragons. It is peopled by magicians, king's sons, heroes who are changed from beggars to possessors of untold wealth in the twinkling of an eye, by princesses of devastating beauty, by ghouls,

vampires, ghosts, corpses that are quick, gods, fairies and phantasms. Hence the music spoken of in the Chinese fairytale is sweeter than that of ordinary life. Just as the fairytale in its most characteristic moments is raised to a plane of glamor and poesy far above earthly levels, so its music approaches the music of the spheres, has a subtler charm, a more eloquent loveliness than any springing from a purely mundane source.

There is a sad little Teuton fairytale by Grimm called "The Singing Bone." It is the tale of a younger brother slain by his senior, who buried the body beneath a bridge which led over a stream. Years afterward a shepherd who was driving his flock across the bridge, saw a snow-white bone lying on the sand below, and thought it would make a good mouthpiece for his horn. So he whittled it into shape, fitted it to his horn and began to blow the latter. No sooner had he done so than the bone itself began to sing, to the shepherd's great astonishment, and told in its song the cruel and traitorous details of the murder. And again and again, when the shepherd put his lips to his horn, there came forth the song which denounced the fratricide, until it reached the king's ears, and brought about the punishment of the wicked brother.

In essence there is only one *Wunderhorn*, one magic horn of fairytale, for all that its mouthpieces, which determine individual racial tone-color and quality, are many. Yet though it be by way of translation that we come to the Chinese mouthpiece which (as "The Singing Bone" is fitted to the shepherd's horn in Grimm's story) we here use for the purpose of giving an idea of the place occupied by music in the fairytales of the Middle Kingdom, its song is true to its own peculiar racial self, and its music not to be mistaken for any other.

#### MUSIC IN CHINESE MYTH

Music, like so many other developments of Chinese civilization, has always had something of the immutable about it. It was systematized, crystallized in traditional forms, and, once fixed has seemingly been established for all time. Chinese theorists still classify musical sound according as it is produced by means of skin, stone, metal, clay, wood, bamboo, silk or gourd; they still retain the picturesque ancient names of the five tones of the scale: "The Emperor," "The Prime Minister," "The Subject People," "State Affairs" and "The Picture of the Universe." And we find numerous references to the celestial origin of music and



The "Weaving Maiden," seventh daughter of the Jade King, who spins the cloud silk for the King and Queen of Heaven.—From *The Chinese Fairy Book*.

(Courtesy of the Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York.)

descriptions of the music of the gods and immortals in Chinese fairytale and literature.

In the celestial realms of the Jade King, the Lord of Heaven, above the great four-square sea where fish with golden scales clove the green waves, and in which the Jade King's daughters (of whom the seventh is the Weaver Maiden, who weaves the cloud-silk of the skies) disported themselves, "countless magic birds flew up and down, singing." And we have singing maidens on the moon as well. An emperor of the Tang dynasty once sat at wine with two sorcerers, and when he expressed a wish to visit the abode of the Moon Fairy, one of them threw his bamboo wand into the air, where it straightway turned into a bridge, along which the emperor and the necromancers made their way to the palace of the Moon Fairy, with all its wonders of silver pagoda towers and crystal walls. And the Moon Fairy called upon her maidens, and they came riding up on white birds, and danced and sang beneath the magic cassia-tree. And the music of the heavens is described most poetically in the tale of "King Mu of Dschau." It seems that a magician came to the king from out of the West, one who could pass through fire and water, rise into the air without falling, and change himself into a thousand different shapes. The king, who had a deep respect for necromancy, treated him with great honor, built a lofty tower for him to dwell in, and sent him the loveliest of maidens he could find, clad in silks, adorned with jewels and scented with fragrant herbs, to fill the tower-palace and "sing the songs of the ancient kings" for the sorcerer's pleasure. And then, one day, the magician bade the king take hold of his sleeve, and they rose through the air to the magician's palace in the skies.

It was built of gold and silver, and ornamented with pearls and precious stones. It towered above rain and clouds, and none could say whereon it rested. To the eye it had the appearance of heaped-up clouds. And what the senses perceived was altogether different from the things of the human world. It seemed to the king that he was truly in the midst of the purple depths of the ethereal city, *the harmony of the heavenly spheres*, where Great God dwelt himself . . . the sounds which met the king's confused ears he was unable to grasp.

Later, on another magic journey, the divine Queen Mother of the West entertained King Mu at her castle by the jade fountains. She gave him rock marrow and the fruits of the jade-trees to eat, "then sang him a song and taught him a magic formula by means of which he could gain long life." Here we have, definitely, an allusion to the magic song, the song of incantation, which we find beneficently used on this occasion; but of

which so many maleficent examples occur in the literature of Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as in the modern tribal practice of peoples as remote from each other as are the negroes of the Congo and the North American Indians.

In the white-jade palaces and the peach-gardens of immortality of Chinese myth, there is as much music to be heard as in the golden streets and temples of the Christian New Jerusalem; the divine Nu Wa, who first instituted matrimony, and also established the laws of music (is she credited with both accomplishments because, theoretically at least, they represent systems of purest harmony?), is, from a Chinese standpoint, quite as musical as Saint Cecilia. And of the Eight Immortals who dwell in the Chinese heavens, at least two are singers. One is Dschang Go, reputed to have been a white bat before he turned into a human being, and acquired the hidden knowledge in primal times. When the Tang dynasty first came to the throne, Dschang Go appeared in various cities as a venerable white-bearded ancient, "with a bamboo drum on his back, riding on a black mule. He beat the drum and sang." Lan Tsai Ho, another of the Immortals, hung about the market-places in a torn blue gown and with but a single shoe, and sang a song of the nothingness of life. And in the story of the "Priest of Lauschan," in which a Taoist magician, at the request of his disciples, compels the Moon Fairy to appear, and dance and sing for them, "her voice was pure and clear as a flute." "Sky o' Dawn," a divine star-god who spent eighteen years on earth as the confidant of a Chinese emperor, ". . . could whistle admirably. Whenever he whistled with full tones, long drawn out, the sun-motes danced to his whistling." And there is a Chinese fairytale called "Help in Need," in which a semi-divine princess, the daughter of a Dragon-King, hard pressed by an unwelcome suitor of her own immaterial kind, appeals to a provincial governor for a loan of the souls of such of his soldiers who have fallen in battle, to aid her to withstand the hosts of her admirer. When they cannot make head against them under the ghostly leader who commands them, the governor burns incense before an altar, and lends her the soul of his best living general, whose spirit is thereupon translated to the city in which the princess dwells. The princess bids him to a banquet of honor: "She sat there erect, surrounded by painted maid-servants of incomparable beauty. They plucked the strings and blew flutes . . . wine was served, and the meal was brought in to the sound of music." After he had defeated her foes, the distinguished captain's soul returned to the body which had been lying inanimate during the period of its

absence on the couch in his tent in camp. In the tale of "The Outcast Princess," also of the race of dragon-beings, another admirer has an opportunity of enjoying music of celestial origin. At a festal banquet which is held beneath the surface of the Sea of Dungting, to celebrate the destruction of the villain (who in this case happens to be the lady's husband) Liu I, who eventually succeeds him, enjoys a feast for ears and eyes.

Music and the dance lent charm to the meal. A thousand warriors with banners and lances in their hands stepped forward. They carried out a war dance. *The music expressed how Tsian Tang had broken through the enemy ranks, and the hair of the guest, as he listened, rose in his head with terror!* Then, again, the sound of strings, flutes and little golden bells was heard. Clad in red and green silk, a thousand maidens danced around. The return of the Princess was expressed in tones. *They sounded like a song, like sobbing, like sadness and lament, and all who heard were moved to tears.*

There is indeed a sufficiency of music in the divine and semi-divine abodes of the gods of Cathay. Many, if they formulate thoughts anent the music of a biblical paradise, might be inclined to conceive it, vaguely, as a spiritualization of the Ambrosian or Gregorian chant (certainly not the type of religious music represented by the average sacred song of the day), sung by myriads of white-robed and white-winged angels, assisted by all the accompanying instruments which biblical statement, ecclesiastical tradition and the more profane imagination of the Renaissance painters have established as belonging to the scene: the harp, the trumpet, the sistrum, the organ, the flute, lute, violin, and even the bass viol. Orchestrally we would seem to have an advantage over the polytheistic Mongol, yet semi-celestial and celestial regions whose scheme admits of the introduction of the pantomime and ballet in connection with instrumental and vocal music, which allows the programmatic as well as the absolute in tone, which has the voice of the phoenix and the chime effect of golden bells to lend variety to its choruses, might to some seem preferable, musically, to those whose program is an eternity of choral laudation.

Unfortunately we have as yet no authentic musical exhibits from either source by means of which to establish a comparison; a musical ouija-board might suggest possibilities. Or, now that the radio has been enlisted in the service of spiritism, why should we not listen (after the ultimate perfection of electrical wireless transmission) to such music as the blessed spirits may make! A definite knowledge of what they might have to hear



through the ages of ages might easily offset earthly differences of race, color and creed in the case of true music-lovers, who might look on musical variety as the spice of eternal as well as mortal life. But thus far we are at a loss. That emperor of the Tang dynasty who visited the moon, and who there listened to the song of the moon maidens, “. . . had the songs which he had heard on the moon written down, and sung in his pear garden to the accompaniment of jasper flutes.” But no echo of them has come down to us from the past.

### TWO ODD CHINESE MUSICAL LEGENDS

Perhaps the most interesting proof of the rôle played by music in Chinese fairytale and legend, and, by induction, in Chinese life itself, is afforded by the two colorful stories of “The Fluteplayer” and “The Music of Destruction,” which we give in full. In both *music* is the true motive, the pivotal point about which the narrative turns. In “The Fluteplayer” the tale and its characters move from terrestrial to celestial regions; in “The Music of Destruction,” while spirits are involved, the earth remains the scene of action.

#### THE FLUTEPLAYER

It once happened, in days long since past, that a young daughter was born to a Prince of Tsin. And when she was born a rock was brought to the prince which, when it was split open, disclosed a lump of green jade-stone. When the little daughter's first birthday came around, a table laden with a great variety of gifts, including the precious jade-stone, had been prepared for the child; but the stone was the only thing which she would take from the table, and the only thing with which she would play. And, since she would not allow it to leave her hands, she was named “Toys-with-Jewels.” As she grew up she became lovelier in face and in form than any other maiden, and proved to be greatly gifted. Since she played beautifully upon the syrinx, and understood how to compose melodies without ever having taken a lesson, the Prince of Tsin had the most skilled of all his artisans carve a syrinx out of the green jade-stone. When the maiden blew it, it sounded like the singing of the phoenix; and therefore the prince honored and loved the child, and had a palace many stories in height built, wherein to guard her. This palace was called the Phoenix Palace, and the high tower which rose before it was known as the Phoenix Tower. When Toys-with-Jewels was fifteen years of age, the Prince of Tsin thought of finding her a husband. But Toys-with-Jewels entreated him and said: “Let it be no other man but one who knows how to blow the syrinx sweetly, so that his playing and mine may sound together. Such an one I would take, but another I should not care to have.” The prince had his people seek everywhere for a player on the syrinx, but without success.

Now one day it chanced that Toys-with-Jewels was in her palace. She rolled back her curtains and saw the heavens were clear and cloudless, and the moonlight as radiant as a mirror. She commanded her maids to light the incense, took up her green jade syrinx, and seated at the window, commenced to play. The tones of her melody were so clear and high that it seemed as though they must have been heard in the very heavens. A faint breeze stirred continuously, and suddenly it seemed as though someone without were accompanying her melodies; now near, now far it sounded, and secretly aroused Toys-with-Jewels's astonishment. When she ceased blowing, the music of her unknown partner stopped as well; only its overtones trembled for a moment in soft echoes on the air. Toys-with-Jewels stood for a moment at the window: and a sadness as though she mourned for something she had lost overcame her. Thus she stared out of the window until midnight, when the moon had gone down, and the incense had burned out. Then she laid the syrinx in her bed and reluctantly went to sleep.

And while she slept she dreamed that the gate of the South-Western Heavens opened wide, and that a cloud-radiance of five colors, glowing and shining like the day, streamed forth from it. And a handsome youth, with a headdress of stork feathers, came riding down from the heavens on a phoenix, stood before the Phoenix Tower and said to her: "I am the spirit of the Taihua Mountains, and am your destined husband. On the Day of Mid-Autumn we shall meet again." Then he said not another word; but drawing a flute of some red precious stone from the girdle about his hips, leaned against the balcony and began to play. Then the bright-colored phoenix beat his wings and danced, and the singing of the phoenix and the tones of the flute sounded together in harmony through all the heights and depths; sweetly their sound fell upon the ear, and filled it with an entrancing echo. The soul and the thoughts of Toys-with-Jewels became confused. "What is this melody called?" she asked. "It is the first movement of the melody of the Taihau Mountains," replied the handsome youth. "Is it possible to learn it?" again asked Toys-with-Jewels. "Are you not already my promised wife? Why should I not be able to teach it to you?" said the youth. He went toward her and took her hand. This so terrified the maiden that she awoke, her eyes still filled with her dream.

When the day had dawned, she told her dream to the prince, and the prince repeated it to his minister Meng Ming, and sent the latter out to the Taihua Mountains to investigate the matter. There a village elder told Meng Ming what follows: "Since the middle of July a strange person has appeared in this neighborhood. He has woven a hut of reeds for himself on the sparkling hill of stars, and lives there quite alone. Every day he is accustomed to descend in order to buy wine which he drinks in solitude. And he plays his flute without interruption until evening. Its tones can be heard throughout the whole region. Whoever hears them forgets all weariness. Whence the stranger comes none of us know."

Then Meng Ming began to climb the mountains, but when he had reached the sparkling hill of stars, he really saw a man who wore a headdress of stork's feathers. His face appeared to be carved from a precious stone, his lips were red, and the expression of his countenance so free and

so celestially happy that he seemed to be living in a world beyond that of man. Meng Ming at once suspected that this was anything but an ordinary human being. He bowed and asked his name. "My father's name is Schao," replied the youth, "and my given name is Sche. Who are you? And why do you come here?" "I am the minister of this land," replied Meng Ming. "My lord and master is about to seek a husband for his daughter. Since she blows the syrninx with great art, he will take none other for son-in-law but one who is able to play together with her. Now the prince had heard that you were deeply versed in music, and has been thirsting to look upon you. Hence he sent me out to take you to him." Said the youth, "I hardly know anything about the various tonalities, and aside from this negligible flute-playing I have no art. I do not dare to follow your command." "Let us seek my master together," replied Meng Ming, "and then all will be made clear."

So Meng Ming took him back with him in his carriage, first made his report, and then led Schao Sche before the prince that he might pay homage to him. The prince sat in the Phoenix Tower, and Schao Sche cast himself down before him and said: "I am a subject from the countryside and from the hills, and an altogether ignorant man. I know nothing of court ceremonies, and beg that you will treat me mercifully and forgive me." The Prince of Tsin studied Schao Sche, and noticed the free and happy expression of his countenance, which seemed truly celestial. And he took a lively pleasure in the arrival of the stranger, had him seat himself beside him and asked: "I hear that you know how to play the flute admirably. Can you also blow the syrninx?" "I can play the flute, but not the syrninx," replied Schao Sche. "I had been looking for a man who could play the syrninx, but the flute is not the same thing." Turning to Meng Ming he added, "He is no partner for my daughter," and commanded that he be led away. Then Toys-with-Jewels sent a serving maid to the prince with the message: "Flute and syrninx—both obey the same law of music. If your guest can play the flute so admirably, why not let him show his art?"

The Prince of Tsin took her advice, and ordered Schao Sche to play. Schao Sche took up his flute, made of a crimson precious stone: the jewel was radiant and oily, its crimson gleam was mirrored in the eyes of those present. It was truly a rare treasure. Schao Sche played the first movement: slowly a clear wind arose. At the second movement colored clouds came flying from all four points of the heavens; and when he played the third, white storks could be seen dancing opposite each other in the skies. Peacocks sat in pairs in the trees, hundreds of birds of different kinds accompanied his music with the harmony of their songs, until, after a time, they dispersed.

The Prince of Tsin was highly delighted. In the meantime Toys-with-Jewels had witnessed the whole miracle from behind a curtain and said: "In truth, this is he who ought to play with me." The Prince asked Schao Sche: "What is the origin and the difference between flute and syrninx?" "In the beginning," replied Schao Sche, "the syrninx was invented. But then men found that greater simplicity was possible, and out of the pipe of four reeds they made the pipe of one reed, the flute." "And how is it," again asked the Prince of Tsin, "that you are able to lure the birds to you by means of your playing?" "The tones of the flute

resemble the song of the phoenix," returned Schao Sche. "The phoenix is the king of all the hundreds of species of birds. Hence they all believe that the phoenix is singing and hasten up. Once, when the Emperor Sun discovered the mode Schao Schao, the phoenix himself appeared. And if it is possible to lure the phoenix by means of music, why not the other birds?" The Prince of Tsin noticed that the speaker's voice was full and sonorous, grew more and more content, and said: "I have a favorite daughter whose name is Toys-with-Jewels. She has so great an understanding of music that I would not willingly give her to a deaf man. Hence she shall be your wife." Schao Sche's face grew sober, he bowed a number of times and said: "I am a peasant from the mountains. How might I venture to enter into a union with the noble princess?" "When my daughter was but a child," answered the prince, "she swore that none other than a blower on the syrinx should be her husband. Your flute, however, penetrates heaven and earth and conquers every living creature: it is better than the syrinx. Then, too, my daughter once dreamed a dream. This is the Day of Mid-Autumn, and the will of heaven is plain. Hence, do not refuse!" Then Schao Sche cast himself on the ground and spoke his thanks.

Now the prince wished his soothsayer to select an auspicious day for the nuptials. But the soothsayer said: "This is the Mid-Autumn Day, no time is more propitious. The moon shines full in the heavens, and all men on earth breathe joyfully." So the prince at once had a bath prepared, and had Schao Sche led to it, that he might cleanse himself. And when he had changed his garments he was taken to the Phoenix Castle, where he was united with Toys-with-Jewels. The following day the Prince appointed Schao Sche a mandarin; but he paid no attention to his duties, for all his official rank, and spent all his time in the Phoenix Castle. He ate no cooked food and only, from time to time, drank a few goblets of wine. Toys-with-Jewels learned from him his secret of breathing, so that in the end she too was able to live without food. In addition he taught her a melody by means of which one could lure the phoenix.

Half a year had gone by when, one night, the pair were playing together in the moonlight. Suddenly there appeared a violet-colored phoenix, who stationed himself to the left of the Phoenix Tower, and a crimson dragon, who uncoiled himself at its right. Then Schao-Sche said: "In the upper world I was a spirit. Then the Ruler of the Heavens sent me down, when the books of history had become disordered, so that I might order them. Thus, in the seventeenth year of the reign of the Emperor Djou Schuan-Wang on earth, I was born as a son into the family Schao. Up to the death of Schuan-Wang, the historiographers were incapable. But I arranged the books of history from the beginning to the end of the period and ordered them, so that they might be continued. And because of my labors with the history books the people called me Schao Sche. But all this happened more than a hundred years ago. The Ruler of the Heavens commanded me to rule in the Hua Hills as a mountain spirit. Yet, since this marriage with you was already predestined, he brought us together by means of the tones of the flute. Now, however, we may no longer remain here on earth, for dragon and phoenix have come to bear us away. We must depart.

Toys-with-Jewels first wished to bid her father farewell; but Schao Sche said: "No, those who wish to become spirits must turn away their thoughts from all that is earthly. How could you then still cling to a relative?" So Schao Sche mounted the crimson dragon and Toys-with-Jewels the violet phoenix, and they rode away from the Phoenix Tower through the clouds. And that same night the phoenix was heard to sing in the mountains of Taihua.

When the maid of the princess reported what had happened to the Prince of Tsin the following morning, he first lost all power of speech. And at last he wailed: "So it is true that such happenings as this, with spirits and genies, really take place? If a dragon or phoenix were to come this moment to carry me off, I would leave my land with as little regret as I would fling away an old shoe." He sent out many men into the Taihua Mountains to look for the two musicians. But they had disappeared for good and all, and were never seen or heard of again.

In essence the story of "The Fluteplayer" is a prose hymn in praise of music: in the guise of a fairy tale or legend, it emphasizes the truth of the divinity of music, its powers to raise the soul from mundane levels to celestial altitudes of bliss. Is there, in any fairytale literature, a more lovely development of the thought in story-form? If "The Fluteplayer," however, dwells on the magic power of harmonious sound, its ability to transfigure man and control the winds and birds, in "The Music of Destruction" another phase of its compelling influence is described, one more sinister, evoking tempests in place of rose-colored clouds.

#### THE MUSIC OF DESTRUCTION

In the days when Ling Kung had but just been crowned Prince of We, he undertook a journey to pay his neighbor, Prince Ping Kung of Djin a visit. For the latter had caused to be erected so magnificent a palace that the princes of every land visited him to wish him joy. The name of the palace was Se Ki. Now when Ling Kung in the course of his journey reached the Pu river, he took quarters for the night in an inn. Yet he was unable to sleep, although it was in the middle of the night, for it seemed to him that he could hear the tones of a zither. He flung a mantle about him, sat up in bed, and leaning against his pillows, listened intently. The sounds were very faint, and yet clearly to be distinguished. Never had he heard the like: it was a mode to which mortal ears had never before listened. He questioned his suite, but one and all declared that they had heard nothing.

Ling Kung was used to music and loved it. It chanced that he had a court musician, Kuan by name, who was gifted in the finding of new modes and tonalities, and who knew how to compose the melody of the four seasons, so that it really seemed to be spring, summer, fall and winter, according as he played. Therefore Ling Kung was very fond of him, and took him along with him wherever he went, and wherever he stayed. And now he sent his retinue to call Kuan: Kuan came. The song that

the Prince had heard had not as yet ended. "Do you hear it?" asked Ling Kung, "it sounds like the music of the evil spirits!" Kuan listened intently, and after a time the sounds ceased. "I have noted it in my memory in a general way," said Kuan, "but it will take another night before I can write it down." So Ling Kung remained another night in the same spot. At midnight the song of the zither once more arose. Then the court musician took his own zither and practiced, until at last he had absorbed all the beauties of the song he had heard.

Now when they arrived in Djin, had paid their homage and respects, and the ceremonies were over, Ping Kung had a festival banquet prepared on the Se-Ti terrace. Wine had already flowed freely when Ping Kung said: "Long ago I was told that you had a musician in We, by the name of Kuan, who was gifted in the discovery of new modes and tonalities. Is he not here to-day?" "He is in the cellar-room beneath the terrace," replied Ling Kung. "Then I beg that you will have him called for my sake," answered Ping Kung. Ling Kung called and Kuan came up on the terrace. At the same time Ping Kung had his own court musician, Kuang, sent for, and since he was blind he was led up the terrace steps. The two flung themselves down at the head of the staircase and greeted the two princes. Then Ping Kung asked: "Tell me, Kuan, what new modes are current nowadays?" Kuan replied: "On the way hither I heard something altogether new. I should be glad to have a zither in order to play it for you."

At once Ping Kung commanded his retinue to set up a table, and to bring the old zither made of the wood of the Indian gum-tree, and lay it down before Kuan. First Kuan tuned the seven strings, and then began to move his fingers and play. And after he had heard no more than a few tones, Ping Kung began to praise the melody. Yet Kuan had not even finished the first half before the blind musician Kuang laid his hand on the zither, and said: "This melody of the downfall and destruction of the empire is one you should not play! Stop playing it!" "What do you mean by this saying?" inquired Ping Kung. And Kuang answered: "When the cycle of the preceding dynasty was nearing its close, a musician by the name of Yiang invented a mode which bears the name of *meme*. This is that mode. The Emperor Djou heard it, and it made him forget all his weariness. Yet soon after he was dethroned by the Prince Wu Wang, whereupon the musician Yiang fled with his zither to the East, and leaped into the Pu river. Now when it chances that one who loves music passes the spot, this melody sounds up from the water. If Kuan has heard it on his way, it could only have been by the Pu river."

Ling Kung was secretly surprised at the truth of this speech. Ping Kung, however, asked: "What harm is there if this song of a dethroned dynasty be played?" "Djou lost his empire through sensual music. This is a melody of misfortune, and should not be played." "But I am fond of new music," cried Ping Kung. "Kuan shall play the song for me to its end!" So Kuan once more tuned the strings, and in his play he pictured all the conditions of the soul between immobility and movement. It sounded like talking and weeping. Ping Kung, in glad excitement, asked Kuang: "What is this mode called?" "It is called *Tsing Schang*," replied Kuang. "*Tsing Schang* is probably the saddest mode of them all," said Ping Kung. "*Tsing Schang* is sad, indeed," replied Kuang,

"yet still more sad is the mode *Tsing Tse*." Then Ping Kung asked: "Can I not hear *Tsing Tse*?" "Impossible," Kuang at once answered. "If former rulers heard it, it was because they were virtuous and upright men. In these days rulers have but little virtue, and they may not hear this tonality." "But I am passionately fond of new music," cried Ping Kung. "Do not dare to refuse me this!"

So Kuang had no choice but to take up the zither and play. No sooner had he finished the first movement, than a swarm of black storks came flying from the South, and gathered upon the gates and beams of the palace. They could be counted—eight pair. Kuang went on playing. Then all the storks flapped their wings and sang. They settled down in rows on the steps of the terrace, and stood eight on either side. Kuang played the third movement: the storks stretched their necks, flapped their wings, sang and danced. The melody resounded to to the very heavens, and to the Silver River (Milky Way). Ping Kung clapped his hands in the excess of his delight, all the crowded festival tables swelled with pleasure, and above and below the terrace all the spectators leaped about admiring the marvel. Ping Kung with his own princely hand seized a beaker of white jade-stone, filled with the costliest wine and handed it to Kuang, who emptied it. Then Ping Kung sighed and said: "We can go as far as *Tsing Tse*, but there is nothing higher." "There is something higher," answered Kuang, "and it is the tonality of *Tsing Kiao*." A profound terror passed through Ping Kung. "If there be aught higher than *Tsing Tse*, then why do you not let me hear it?" "*Tsing Kiao*," said Kuang, "cannot be compared with *Tsing Tse*. I dare not play it. Once, in the grey primal days, the Emperor Huang To gathered together the demons and spirits on the Taishan Mountain. He drove there in his elephant-wagon, to which crocodiles and dragons were harnessed. The paladin Pi-Fang sat by his side, the paladin Tse-Yu went before him. The Prince of the Winds swept the dust from his way, the Rainman moistened the roads for him, tigers and wolves preceded him and demons and spirits followed after. Monstrous serpents lay in the path, and phoenixes covered the skies. And there a great gathering of the demons and spirits invented the *Tsing Kiao* mode. Since that time the virtue of princes has decreased. They are no longer able to hold the spirits and demons in subjection, and the empire of mortals is entirely cut off from that of the spirits. Now, when this tonality is played, the demons and spirits gather once more, evil and misfortune comes of it, and good fortune disappears." But Ping Kung cried: "Since I am as old as I am, I will, for once, hear the *Tsing Kiao* mode! And if it were my death, still I should not regret it!" Kuang obstinately refused to play, but Ping Kung leaped up and forced him to do his will.

So Kuang was no longer able to withstand him, and again took up the zither and played. At the first movement, black clouds came up out of the western skies, at the second a sudden tempest arose, tore down the curtains and swept the goblets and dishes from the tables. Roof-tiles flew through the air, the pillars on the terrace burst asunder. Then there resounded a swift thunderbolt and a crash. A tremendous rain poured down and flooded the terrace beneath several feet of water. The inundation spread to the interior of the terrace, and the retinue of

the princes fled in terror. Ping Kung and Ling Kung timidly hid themselves behind the door of a near-by room. Finally the tempest and rain stopped, the retinues once more reassembled and supported the two princes when they stepped out on the terrace. That very same night, however, Ping Kung was overtaken by a great fear, his heart began to beat violently, he became ill, his thoughts grew confused, his will-power paralyzed, and not long after death overwhelmed him.

The antiquity of these tales is more or less proven by the instruments used in them. The fact that the flute played by the princess's lover in "The Fluteplayer" is made of a "red precious stone," shows that the instrument is a *Hsiao* made in the olden days, when flutes were carved from copper, marble and semi-precious stones in the belief that they were less liable to be affected by changes of temperature than the wood, bamboo, of which they are now made. The same applies to the syrinx of the princess, which must have been one of the instruments said to have been invented by the Emperor Shun—the *P'ai-hsiao*, a collection of Pandean pipes, ten tubes gradually decreasing in length and roughly tied together with silk cord. In view of the details of this story, and that of "The Fluteplayer," it is worthy of note that this *P'ai-hsiao* is peculiarly associated with that legendary bird the *Feng-huang* or Phoenix, the sounds emitted by it being supposed to represent his voice, and, as the instrument now appears, in a carved and ornamented frame, its original ten tubes increased to sixteen in number, its frame is shaped to typify the mythical bird with wings outspread. The "old zither made of the wood of the Indian gum-tree" in the tale of "The Music of Destruction," is probably the *Ch-in*, one of the most ancient of Chinese stringed instruments, and one which has been called "the most poetic of all." This tale, like its companion, is supposed to hark back to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and the fact that the musician "tuned the seven strings," shows that innovation had already played its part in changing his instrument; for when Fu Hsi first invented the *Ch-in* in the dim past, in order that its music might "check the evil passions, rectify the heart and guide the actions of the body" (quite a program for a zither!), it could boast of no more than five strings. Most interesting, in connection with these ancient instrumental forms, is the support lent by the story of "The Music of Destruction" to Combarieu's theory of the magic associations of all early music, and music's supposed power to call up demons and bring about convulsions of nature. This again, however, is simply an obverse expression of the Chinese belief that music is the "expression of the perfect harmony existing between heaven, and



earth and man"; that is, of course, music in its purest and divinest sense. As the greater includes the less, this presupposes, as the story shows, a music of evil, which if played, evokes malignant demoniac forces, and lays a curse upon those who hear it.

#### FURTHER MUSICAL ECHOES FROM THE PAGES OF CHINESE FAIRYTALE

If we take up a rather unique volume of Chinese fairytales, "The Chinese Fairy Book,"<sup>1</sup> one to which we have already had recourse in our considerations, and whose fascinating diversity of content and quaint poetic flavor will come as a surprise to many an American reader, and turn its pages, music echoes and re-echoes in the text as we progress. In the story of "Old Dschang," in which a disembodied spirit weds the daughter of a mortal, and bears her away with him to a secret vale where their days pass in blessed content and happiness, we find musical allusions which fall gratefully on the ear, and unite with vivid bits of scenic description in creating a picture of colorful charm. It is the brother of Old Dschang's wife who has come to visit her and catches his first glimpse of his brother-in-law's home.

Before the village there flowed a deep brook of clear, blue water. With his guide he crossed a bridge of stone which led them to the gate. Here trees and flowers were mingled in colorful profusion. Peacocks and cranes flew about, and from the distance sounded the music of flute and strings. Pure tones rose to the skies. A messenger in a purple gown received the guest at the gate, and led him into a hall, magnificent beyond measure. Exotic perfumes filled the air, and little bells of pearl were chiming . . .

Later, when the spirit brother-in-law, his wife and mother take a little outing, riding through the air on phœnixes and cranes, "colored clouds rose in the courtyard and a delightful music sounded forth." And even Du Dsi Tschun, a profligate who proceeds to run through one fortune after another, as soon as his magician benefactor bestows it upon him, in the tale of "The Kindly Magician," at least shows musical good taste, since "he always surrounded himself with singing-girls," though the statement must be qualified by the fact that in China the singing-girl does not invariably rely upon her *voix de tête* alone to charm the susceptible heart.

To turn to worthier music-lovers, we have the "art" fairy-tale of "The Flower-Elves," one of the most exquisitely poetic of

<sup>1</sup>Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York.

all Chinese nature fairytales. In it the twelve lovely maidens who are the incorporations of the peach, the flowering prune, and other young trees of the lonely scholar's garden, and who are hospitably entreated by him at a little nocturnal banquet, mingle the fragrance of the blossoms they symbolize with music.

The moon shone brightly, and the flowers exhaled intoxicating odors. After they had partaken of food and drink the maids rose, danced and sang. Sweetly the sound of their singing echoed through the falling gloam, and their dance was like that of the butterflies fluttering about the flowers. The scholar was so overpowered with delight that he no longer knew whether he were in heaven or on earth.

In the tale of "The King of the Ants," a charming Lilliputian fancy, in which a host of little ant-men in every respect minuscules of human kind, invade a scholar's study with all the pomp and circumstance of a king with court and retinue, music is not forgotten, for all that its strain is an attenuate one. Tents are put up on the edge of the saucer which holds the scholar's purple writing-ink, and a banquet is prepared.

A great number of guests sat down to table. Musicians and dancers stood ready [in ancient Chinese music, as in that of the Greeks, sweet sound played a prime part as a regulator of the movements of the dance]. There was a bright confusion of mingled garments of purple and scarlet, crimson and green. Pipes and flutes, fiddles and cymbals sounded, and the dancers moved in the dance. The music was very faint, yet its melodies could be clearly distinguished.

Here the "pipes" and "flutes" mentioned are probably the *P'ai-hsiao* and *Hsiao* already described. The "fiddle" is the Chinese violin, the *Hu-ch'in*, with a hollow cyndrical body whose upper end is covered with a snake skin while the lower remains open. It has four silk strings, and the bow passes between the strings in playing, which calls for quite a special technique. There is also a two-stringed Chinese violin, the *Erh-hsien*, but this is principally affected by the lower classes, and it is only fair to suppose that royalty—which in every age and clime has favored the best in its court music—would do the same in the ant kingdoms of fairytale, and that hence the *Hu-ch'in* was the instrument used. The cymbals, or *Po*, supposed to be of Indian origin, are made on the principle of cymbals the world over.

In the tale of the wise man Dschang Liang, who ate no food, concentrated in spirit, and frequented the society of the four whitebeards of the Shang mountain until, at will, he loosed his soul from his body and became one of the immortals, we hear of a

Chinese equivalent of the angelic cherub. Dschang Liang once met two boys who were singing and dancing:

Green the garments you should wear,  
If to heaven's gate you'd fare,  
There the Golden Mother meet,  
Bow before the Wood Lord's feet!

When Dschang Liang heard this he bowed before the youths and said to his friends: "Those are angel children of the King Father of the East. The Golden Mother is the Queen of the West. The Lord of Wood is the King Father of the East. They are the two primal powers; the parents of all that is male and female, the root and fountain of heaven and earth, to whom all that has life is indebted for its creation and nourishment. The Lord of Wood is the master of all male saints; the Golden Mother is the mistress of all female saints. Whoever would gain immortality must first greet the Golden Mother, and then bow before the King Father. Then he may rise to the three Pure Ones and stand in the presence of the Highest. The *song* of the angel children shows the manner in which hidden knowledge may be acquired.

Here we have another instance of the intimate association of music with the Chinese spiritual world, either for good or for bad, in this case the former.

The fairytale of "Old Dragonbeard" introduces another instance of banquet music, for a festival, a banquet without music, seems an unheard-of thing in Chinese actual life as well as in its fairytale.

Flacons and dishes and all the utensils were made of gold and jade, and ornamented with pearls and precious stones. Two companies of girl musicians blew alternately upon flutes and chalumeaus [the Chinese shepherd pipe, *Ch'iang-ti*]. They sang and danced, and it seemed to the visitors that they had been transported to the palace of the Lady of the Moon. The rainbow garments fluttered, and the dancing girls were beautiful beyond all the beauty of earth.

In the tale of "The Golden Canister," we find a musical allusion of some subtlety. It is a tale of the feudal age in China, of a certain Count of Ludschou who

had a slave-girl who could play the lute admirably . . . Once there was a great feast held in the camp. Said the slave-girl: "The large kettledrum sounds so sad to-day; some misfortune must surely have happened to the kettledrummer!" The count sent for the kettledrummer and questioned him. "My wife has died," he replied, "yet I did not venture to ask for leave of absence. That is why, in spite of me, my kettledrum sounded so sad." The count allowed him to go home.

The esteem in which the lute-player and lute-music were held is shown by the poem by Po-Chu-I (A.D. 772-846), which Herbert A. Giles has Englished in prose. It is not a fairytale, but is so essentially musical and charming that we cannot forbear presenting it.

By night, at the riverside, adieus were spoken: beneath the maple's flowerlike leaves, blooming amid autumnal decay. Host had dismounted to speed the parting guest, already aboard his boat. Then a stirrup-cup went round, but no flute, no guitar was heard. And so, ere the heart was warmed with wine, came words of cold farewell beneath the bright moon, glittering over the bosom of the broad stream . . . when suddenly across the water a lute broke forth into sound. Host forgot to go, guest lingered on, wondering whence the music, and asking who the performer might be. At this all was hushed, but no answer given. A boat approached, and the musician was invited to join the party. Cups were refilled, lamps trimmed again, and preparations for festivity renewed. At length, after much pressing, she came forth, hiding her face behind her lute; and twice or thrice sweeping the strings, betrayed emotion ere her song was sung. Then every note she struck swelled with pathos deep and strong, as though telling the tale of a wrecked and hopeless life, while with bent head and rapid finger she poured forth her soul in melody. Now softly, now slowly, her plectrum sped to and fro; now this air now that; loudly, with the crash of falling rain; softly, as the murmur of whispered words; now loud and soft together, like the patter of pearls and pearllets dropping upon a marble dish. Or liquid, like the warbling of the mango-bird in the bush; trickling, like the streamlet on its downward course. And then, like the torrent, stilled by the grip of frost, so for a moment was the music lulled, in a passion too deep for sound. Then, as bursts the water from the broken vase, as clash the arms upon the mailed horseman, so fell the plectrum once more upon the strings with a slash like the rent of silk.

Silence on all sides: not a sound stirred the air. The autumn moon shone silver athwart the tide, as with a sigh the musician thrust her plectrum beneath the strings and quietly prepared to leave. "My childhood," said she, "was spent at the capital, in my home near the hills. At thirteen, I learnt the guitar, and my name was enrolled among the *primas* of the day. The *maestro* himself acknowledged my skill: the most beauteous women envied my lovely face. The youths of the neighborhood vied with each other to do me honor: a single song brought me I know not how many costly bales. Golden ornaments and silver pins were smashed, blood-red skirts of silk were stained with wine, in oft-times echoing applause. And so I laughed on from year to year, while the spring breeze and autumn moon swept over my careless head.

"Then my brother went away to the wars: my mother died. Nights passed and mornings came; and with them my beauty began to fade. My doors no longer thronged; but few cavaliers remained. So I took a husband and became a trader's wife. He was all for gain, and little recked of separation from me. Last month he went off to buy tea, and I remained behind, to wander in my lonely boat on moon-lit nights over

the cold wave, thinking of the happy days gone by, my reddened eyes telling of tearful dreams."

The sweet melody of the lute had already moved my soul to pity, and now these words pierced me to the heart again. "O lady," I cried, "we are companions in misfortune, and need no ceremony to be friends. Last year I quitted the Imperial city, and fever-stricken reached this spot, where in its desolation, from year's end to year's end, no flute or guitar is heard. I live by the marshy river-bank, surrounded by yellow reeds and stunted bamboos. Day and night no sounds reach my ears save the blood-stained note of the nightjar, the gibbon's mournful wail. Hill songs I have, and village pipes with their harsh discordant twang. But now that I listen to thy lute's discourse, methinks 'tis the music of the gods. Prithee sit down awhile and sing to us yet again, while I commit thy story to writing."

Grateful to me (for she had been standing long), the lute-girl sat down and quickly broke forth into another song, sad and soft, unlike the song of just now. Then all her hearers melted into tears unrestrained; and none flowed more freely than mine, until my bosom was wet with weeping.

"The Monk of the Yangtsee-Kiang," who became a great Buddhist teacher and saint, in one part of his life-tale is endeavoring to apprise his imprisoned mother that he stands without her door. "The woman was sitting at home, and when she heard the 'wooden fish' beaten so insistently before the door, and heard the words of deliverance, the voice of her heart cried out in her." This *Mu-yu*, or "wooden fish," is a hollow block of wood shaped somewhat like a skull or a fish, and said to have been invented during the eighth century, in the reign of the Tang dynasty. It is painted red, is of all sizes, from a foot up, and is beaten by means of a drumstick. The Buddhist priests use it to mark the rhythm in the recitation of prayers, or to call attention to themselves when begging from door to door.

In the art-fairytale of "The Heartless Husband" we have as heroine a beggar-king's "Little Golden Daughter," who is "... a skilled dancer and singer and can play upon the flute and zither." This, in addition to numerous other accomplishments, is to show that no expense had been spared in her bringing-up. In the tale of "Giauna the Beautiful," dealing with the advantages of a human youth with a family of "talking foxes" (spirit beings generally inimical to man, but in this case friendly), Kung, the young scholar, has been correcting the essays of the youthful "talking fox" who has become his pupil, in the latter's home. The pupil's father has retired "after a few beakers of wine," and the fox youth turned to a small boy and said: "See whether the old gentleman has already fallen asleep. If he has you may quietly bring in little Hiang-Nu."

A "little Hiang-Hu" might, perhaps, suggest quite other connotations were the fox youth an American college student, intent on relaxation after serious study. But the Chinese aspirant to the rewards of learning is eager for—music!

The boy went off and the youth took a lute from an embroidered case. At once a serving-maid entered, dressed in red, and surpassingly beautiful. The youth bade her sing "The Lament of the Beloved," and her melting tones moved the heart. The third watch of the night had passed before they retired to sleep.

We might close our considerations anent music in the Chinese fairytale with some citations from "Rose of Evening," surely one of the most poetic, most delicate and tender that the imagination has divided among any of the nations. It is a tale of one of the youths who, at the Dragon Junk Festival, are trained to sit on a board floating in the water, attached to the tailend of the festival junk, and there turn somersaults, stand on their heads, and perform all sorts of tricks. Often these hapless youngsters are drowned, and it is the custom to give the parents of those boys who are hired for the purpose the money in advance, before they are trained. Then their subsequent death is on no one's conscience. Aduan, the hero of the tale, falls into the water and is drowned. "Yet Aduan did not know he had been drowned," and makes his way to the court of the Prince of the Dragon's Cave, beneath the Yellow River. There he finds music, enough and to spare. The description of the tones and rhythms of this subsequent world seem to beg the composer to write their music for all to hear. "Mother Hia" teaches the drowned urchins of the Yellow River, assembled beneath its waters, the dances which make the delight of the river-prince's court, and Aduan, in his turn, learns them from her. "She taught him the dance of the flying thunders of Tsian-Tang River, and the music that calms the winds on the Sea of Dung-Ting. When the cymbals and kettledrums reëchoed through all the courts, they stunned the ear. Then, again, all the courts would fall silent." We are given an account of the dances at the court of the Prince of the Dragon's Cave:

When all the dancers had assembled, the dance of the Ogres was danced first. Those who performed it wore devil-masks and garments of scales. They beat upon enormous cymbals and their kettledrums were so large that four men could just about span them. Their sound was like the sound of a mighty thunder, and the noise was so great that nothing else could be heard. When the dance began, tremendous waves spouted up to the very skies, and then fell down again like star-glimmer which scatters in the air.

The Prince of the Dragon's Cave hastily bade the dance cease, and had the dancers of the nightingale step forth. These were all lovely girls of sixteen. They made delicate music with flutes, so that the breeze blew and the roaring of the waves was stilled in a moment. The water gradually became as quiet as a crystal world, transparent to its lowest depths. When the nightingale dancers had finished, they withdrew and posted themselves in the Western courtyard.

Then came the turn of the swallow dancers. These were all little girls. With the one among them who "danced the dance of the giving of flowers with flying sleeves and waving locks," Aduan falls deeply in love: her name is "Rose of Evening," Aduan, too, plays a solo rôle in this ballet under the water.

. . . Aduan danced alone, and he danced with joy or defiance according to the music. When he looked up and when he looked down, his glances held the beat of the measure. The Dragon Prince, enchanted with his skill, presented him with a garment of five colors, and gave him a caruncle set in golden threads of fish-beard for a hair-jewel.

We cannot follow further the various adventures of these Chinese fairytale lovers, save to remark that they have a happy ending, and to point out that—after Aduan has once more reached the land of mortals, and to all appearances is a mortal himself—the fact that he casts no shadow betrays that he is a departed spirit, an idea which has analogies in Norse and other European fairytales, and an offshoot of which is embodied in Richard Strauss's opera, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. But who can deny the color, the poetic charm of these and other musical allusions, the scope they afford for vivid and lovely tonal painting, their rich possibilities of harmonic development?

#### THE CHINESE FAIRYTALE MOTIVE IN MODERN OCCIDENTAL MUSIC

While the Chinese motive in general has been largely exploited in modern music—for musical Orientalists have been keen to take advantage of the exotic possibilities of the pentatone scale, and the inspirational possibilities of Chinese poetry, as it is known to us through Cramner Byng's beautiful English versions of many of the older Chinese poets—the Chinese fairytale, specifically, has not furnished as great an incentive to the tone-poet. The most outstanding examples of the use of a Chinese fairytale motive in modern music, perhaps, are Gozzi's "Turandot" and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," both tales from the "Thousand and One Nights," Chinese in their milieu, in other words, introducing the Chinese motive as an exotic in a Saracenic ambient; and Hans

Andersen, the Dane's, fairy story of "The Nightingale," also localized in the Flowery Kingdom. In a more recent development of a Chinese subject in opera-form, Clemens von Frankenstein's *Des Kaisers Dichter* ("The Emperor's Poet"), produced in Hamburg, November, 1920, the composer's text-book, by Rudolf Lothar, deliberately ignored the poetic fairytale which the Chinese have woven about the death of the poet in question, Li-Tai-Pe, to present more prosaically human details of his life-story. Li-Tai-Pe, the Omar Khayyam of the Celestial Empire, according to history, fell overboard one day when intoxicated and, to put it plainly, drowned while drunk. His admiring compatriots, however, embellished this tale and the legend runs that Li-Tai-Pe deliberately cast himself into the flood and was borne away into the beyond, not on an alcoholic tide, but on the backs of dolphins, who introduced him to the wonders of the dragon-king's palace beneath the waves.

Gozzi's Arabian-derived fairytale play *Re Turandote* attracted the attention of Carl Maria von Weber, in Schiller's translation and adaptation, however, who, in 1809, wrote the seven incidental numbers of which one—a march, the overture, founded on a genuine Chinese theme which the composer discovered in Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*—is still played. Ferruccio Busoni, a modern of moderns, has also strongly reacted to this Chinese story, in the dramatization which Karl Vollmoeller dedicated to him, and which its author describes as "a modest attempt to cast good metal anew, closely following the Italian of the sardonic nobleman (Gozzi) whose bones have been mouldering by the blue lagoons for over a hundred years." His reaction took the form, first, of a suite of eight orchestral numbers illustrating the play for the original Reinhardt production, and more recently (and utilizing some of the thematic pieces of his symphonic suite) of an opera, *Turandot*. As Busoni himself has said: "The continual colorful alternation of passion and playfulness, of the real and unreal, of the diurnal and the exotically fantastic, was what most tempted me in Gozzi's Chinese fairytale for the theatre." Yet Busoni has not attempted to gain his exotic effects by too close an adherence to original scales or themes. His aim has been to secure the feeling, the illusion of a Chinese music, and this atmosphere he has succeeded in obtaining. His orchestration, in many cases, has been sufficient to establish the Chinese color, as for instance in the grotesque "Truffaldino's March," by the employ of wood-wind, brasses and percussives, and an entire elision of the strings. Vollmoeller's own indications for the music—"From the



right the sounds of a march with kettledrums and tambourines . . . a troop of female slaves beating tambourines"—eliminate strings.

In Hans Andersen's "The Nightingale" we have an art-fairytale of a peculiarly moving and human sort, one which, though due to the invention of a Scandinavian and only placed in a Chinese setting, is above all human in a broad and eclectic fashion. That by reason of its delightful opportunities for the development of exotic effect it should have appealed to Stravinsky for operatic treatment is not surprising, and it is worth any serious student's while to see how brilliantly the latter has exploited the strange colors and bizarre modal capabilities of the Chinese five-tone scale. (In this connection, C. Stanley Wise's "Impressions of Igor Stravinsky," in "The Musical Quarterly," April, 1916, may be consulted to advantage.)

Among Chinese fairytale subjects which have appealed to the modern composer for musical treatment, that of "Aladdin" is popular. Admitting that it is Chinese by way of Arabia, it is the supposed Chinese element and not the Saracenic one which the composer has invariably stressed. There can be no other real reason than the one that of the two exotic color schemes the Chinese promises the most, for there are plentiful vestiges of Mohammedan song and instrumental music in those lands which once made up the empire of Haroun al Raschid—Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Tunis, Algiers.

A particularly fine development of the "Aladdin" story in music is Edgar Stillman Kelley's Chinese orchestral suite "Aladdin" (the writer still recalls with pleasure the impression it made upon him many years ago, when it was first performed in New York at a concert of the Manuscript Society), in which the pentatone scale and such elementary harmonic combination as genuine Chinese music is capable of, serve as a nucleus for the building-up of an imaginative structure of lofty beauty. The first movement of this suite, "The Wedding of the Princess and Aladdin," is based on actual Chinese themes (Kelley obtained them from native players in the old Chinese quarter of San Francisco, long before the great earthquake and fire swept it out of existence) and is, to quote Rupert Hughes, "a sort of sublimated 'shivaree,' in which oboes (probably taking the place of the *Khan-tzu*, the small oboe-like instrument which is a favorite at Chinese weddings), muted trumpets, and mandolins (to approximate the Chinese *P'i-p'a*, the popular Chinese 'balloon guitar') join in producing the merry and colorful uproar that is characteristic of Chinese wedding-music."

The second movement, "A Serenade in the Royal Pear Garden," is more purely lyric. As Hughes puts it, it "begins with a luxurious tone-poem of moonlight and shadow, out of which, after a preliminary tuning of the Chinese lute" (or, rather, the *Sansien*, the three-stringed Chinese guitar, a favorite instrument of the street ballad singers) "wails a lyric caterwaul, alternately in 2-4 and 3-4 tempo, which the Chinese translate as a love-song. Its amorous grotesqueness at length subsides into the majestic night." The third movement, depicting in tone "The Flight of the Genie with the Palace," the plucking of Aladdin's wonderful castle from its proper place, and its majestic projection through the nocturnal air to the bleak desert surroundings where the magician awaits it, is handled with dramatic skill and high imaginative power. Kelley's orchestral device to picture the sweep of the genie's pinions as they cleave the skies—liquid *glissandi* on the upper harp-strings, the violins, *divisi*, and prolific of chromatic runs which afterward subside into sustained harmonics of the most delicately flute-like quality—has been compared to Wagner's inspiration which dictated the use of clear bell-notes to typify the leaping flames of his "Feuerzauber." In the last movement, "The Return and Feast of the Lanterns," the composer obtains a bravura *finale* for his suite by using his original Chinese thematic material in contrapuntal and fugal development, in an elaboration of technical device and richness of instrumental interweaving justified by the character both of his subject and the exoticism which he endeavors to evoke. The gong *Lo*, which, though Kelley uses it to typify the opening of temple gates, is an instrument "popular merely, and not required for imperial worship," might perhaps have been more accurately represented by the *T'e-ch'ing*, or "single sonorous stone," a stone cut in the shape of a carpenter's square, and suspended from a frame, employed "only at religious and court ceremonies." There can be no question that Kelley's "Aladdin" Suite is one of the finest imaginative musical reactions to the Chinese fairytale motive.

Another recent American musical development of the same theme for the operatic stage, of which the writer has been privileged to see some highly interesting orchestral and lyric pages, is that of the young American composer Bernard Rogers, one of Bloch's most talented pupils, whose symphonic dirge "To the Fallen" (Pulitzer Travelling Scholarship) was given in November, 1920, by the Philharmonic. His idea of presenting "Aladdin" musically in the form of an opera, one which, like Kelley's symphonic suite, avails itself in part of Chinese folk-themes, and

develops them with imaginative freedom and in rich and colorful orchestral garb, is one which may well appeal. That the story is one that might lend itself to operatic treatment will hardly be denied. While it is, of course, too early to say much of a score which at present is known only to a few of the composer's friends, those who have seen portions of it agree that the work is one which does credit to his power of invention and technical equipment.

Of the collectively numerous songs in which the Chinese motive, either in poem or in musical treatment, or in both, occurs, there is in the majority of cases no fairytale subject involved. In some instances, as in that of Edgar Stillman Kelley's perennially popular "Lady Picking Mulberries," we have a purely humorous song written in the five-tone scale. Bainbridge Crist has developed Chinese nursery song in his "Chinese Mother Goose" ditties. In settings by Huë, Bantock, our own regretted Charles T. Griffes, and numerous others, in which the ancient poets of China have been drawn upon, we have poetic motives which, save for exoticisms of phrase or expression, or the occasional reflection of amatory or other moods more subtly Oriental than those of our own philosophy of life, are not so very different from our own song poems.

In a recent group of six particularly lovely melodies by Julius Röntgen, *Chinesische Lieder*—of which three are settings of poems by the Li-Tai-Pe who is the subject of von Frankenstein's opera—we have reactions to amatory poems, and not a single fairytale subject. That the Chinese fairytale subject is not altogether without representation in the field of the solo song, however, is evinced by occasional examples. There is, for instance, a very original, expressive and atmospheric song-setting by Richard Hammond, recently published, a little four-page melody, "The Moonbirds' Song" which, in its minuscule way, is a perfect exemplar of how a fairytale poem may be treated musically. It is a tale of a Chinese emperor who climbs to the moon "on a sorcerer's bamboo wand," and to whom, in a world of silver spells, the Moon Fairy appears and bids the white moonbirds dance and sing for him beneath the cassia-tree. In vain the emperor, returned to his pear-tree orchards, searches his memory in order to play the moon-music on his ebon lute. Its charm is lost, he can no longer recall the celestial sweetness of its accents, for " . . . the string of dreams is mute, that gave their song its soul." This poetic fancy Mr. Hammond has handled with a very real charm of imagination, has lent it that quality of the mystic and magical which breathes in the verse. While using the pentatone

scale he has infused a simple and plaintively tender melody with delightful *reflets* of harmonic color, supplying a gracefully nuanced and atmospheric drapery of accompaniment, in which there is a suggestion of the Chinese flute, a background for his melody. A group of piano pieces by the same composer avail themselves of poetic motives drawn from "The Chinese Fairy Book" already adduced in preceding pages, with an originality of invention that proves their value of musical suggestion. One, "The Stone God," tells a legend of G'uan Di, the Chinese god of war.

In Ju Dschou there dwelt a man who was a drunkard and a gambler, and who continually abused and beat his mother. He had a little son, no more than a year old, whose grandmother once took him out for a walk in her arms. Suddenly she made an awkward movement and the child fell on the ground. It became ill in consequence of the fright it had. The grandmother feared her son's wrath and fled from the house. When her son came home and saw that his boy was ill, he asked his wife how it had happened. And when she had told him he fell into a fury and hunted for his mother. He caught sight of her just as she was about to take refuge in the temple of the god of war, and tore her from the threshold of the sanctuary by her hair.

Then the stone statue of the god of war rose without warning from his sitting posture, took the knife from the hand of the figure of Dschou Dsang [his trusty captain, whose statue is placed behind his own in the temples] stepped forth from the door of the temple and hewed the man's head from his shoulders. The priest of the temple, who saw what had taken place, hastily rang bell and beat gong, and read from the holy books. In the streets and in the marketplace the people heard of what had happened and crowded about the temple in astonishment. There they saw the god of war, the knife in his right hand, the severed head in his left. With one foot beyond the threshold, the other within it, the statue stood, immovable as a rock. And ever since that time the statue of the god of war stands thus on the threshold of his temple in Ju Dschou, in token of his power.

Mr. Hammond has turned this fantastic tale of just retribution into a little keyboard drama of tense effect, the massive chord progressions which typify the movements of the stone image climaxing in the stroke of justice, lending an added picturesqueness of the bizarre and barbaric by reason of the exotic harmonies, a sound-evocation that establishes the exotic *locale*, which places the entire concept without the occidental pale.

\*       \*

\*

So practical a being as a French Inspector-General of Instruction (Émile Hovelaque, in *La Chine*) declares

. . . it seems as though all China were nothing but an immensely extended chamber of hallucinations, a vast magic space enclosed on all sides, illumined only by the fairyland lamps and lanterns of flowerboats and opium pavilions and where a single dream runs its unbroken course.

And it is just the vagueness, the richness, the exotically colorful and fantastic quality in the Chinese fairytale which offers the occidental composer so rich a field for poetic musical exploitation. Nor need he approach this fallow land of the exotic by the route of the "Thousand and One Nights," when volumes like "The Chinese Fairy Book" lead him at once within its confines. The Bagdad of the caliphs is no more; but the "Thousand and One Nights" are imperishable, and music still draws beauty from their font of inspiration.

The Porcelain Pagoda of Nankin lies in ruins, the famous pagoda covered from top to bottom with its precious tiles of green and of striped porcelain, whose one hundred and fifty bells chimed above the teeming city, and whose one hundred and forty lamps, to quote a Chinese writer, "when lighted illumined the three and thirty skies, laying bare the good and evil of mankind, and never withholding their light from man's distress." Yet its memory, which inspired Longfellow, has not departed. It is, now that it lies in dust, a more glorious tower of fairytale than in the days of its actual existence; its lamps more radiant, its

. . . porcelain bells that all the time  
Ring with a soft melodious chime

sing but the more sweetly now that we hear them only with the ear of fancy. May they, spirit of an exotic fairy realm, lead the occidental composer whose fancy is tempted by fresh fields and pastures new, to investigate possibilities which are lavish in musical suggestion—the Chinese fairytale.